

Community Preservation Act Committee

Meeting Minutes

February 1, 2017

7:00 pm

Lyons Hearing Room, Town Hall 2nd Floor (*recorded by ACMi)

In attendance were: Clarissa Rowe
Kin Lau
JoAnn Robinson
Richard Murray
Leslie Mayer
Charles Tirone (Arrived at 7:25pm)

Not in attendance: David Levy
Eric Helmuth
Andrew Bengtson

Also in attendance: Jim Feeney

1. **Introduction:** Clarissa Rowe opened the meeting at 7:00pm and explained the session would include presentations by applicants requesting FY18 funding for historic preservation projects. Clarissa Rowe thanked those that participated in last night's session. At Clarissa Rowe's request, all CPAC members in attendance provided introductions and affiliations.
2. **Presentation for the Old Burying Ground/ Mt. Pleasant Cemetery:** George Parsons, Arlington Historical Society, Michele Hassler, Cemetery Commission, and JoAnn Robinson, Arlington Historical Commission, introduced the application for funding for the Old Burying Ground (OBG) and Mt. Pleasant Cemetery. The presentation included an organizational chart for the consultants and project team proposed to complete this project, a map of the OBG, a map of the affected tombs at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, a list of project objectives, as well as pictures of existing conditions. The project will include additional historical research, investigation and documentation of existing conditions, and will provide a plan and cost estimates for the necessary work. Deliverables for the project will include a topographical survey, landscape assessment, engineering assessment of tombs and walls, and the production of bid documents for the most urgent work, which includes the unstable capstones on the wall surrounding the OBG. The project total is \$64,920, which includes a 20% contingency. The presentation concluded with a discussion of the historical significance of these two sites.

Kin Lau asked about including an education component in this project, maybe a plaque or stand. JoAnn Robinson agreed in principle, but did not believe a plaque was the best method. There is existing information from the 2008 OBG survey as well as maps that can be posted online and shared.

Richard Murray asked how long the entire project will take and if there is any estimated of the total expense. George Parsons acknowledged there is no total estimate yet as it is too early to speculate. Mr. Parsons stated the survey work will commence immediately following acquisition of funding.

Leslie Mayer asked about the historical relevance of the Mt. Pleasant tombs, how many there were, and if a structural engineering assessment will be necessary for these tombs. George Parsons answered there are 3 tombs to be evaluated. Michele Hassler pointed back to pictures of leaning stones and spoke about accessing the vaults. Some of the vault walls and ceilings are in sound condition, but still may need to be rebuilt from the outside as the stones have shifted over time, and it is necessary to protect the remains. JoAnn Robinson confirmed Mt. Pleasant is on historic inventory. Michelle confirmed these are only 3 tombs at this site.

Patsy Kraemer commented on the charming chapel structure at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery and believes it could be a revenue source through ceremony rentals. Clarissa Rowe acknowledged recent work done by the Town to the chapel's roof, and stated the CPAC would welcome future applications for funding to enhance the structure.

Brian Rehrig introduced himself as the Capital Planning Committee (CPC) liaison to the CPAC, and discussed how this and other eligible projects should be submitted in parallel to the CPC to ensure everyone is on the same wavelength about funding, and in the event CPC needs to provide additional or backstop funding. Mr. Rehrig questioned whether this project could make use of lots and graves funds. Michele Hassler answered that she did not believe those particular funds could be used for a project of this nature.

Christine Harris suggested that informational pamphlets be developed. Clarissa Rowe spoke in more detail about the 2008 OBG survey completed by Arlington resident Ivan Myjer, which will be updated as part of this project.

Catherine Hrani asked about what is included in the landscape assessment, and if tree replacement will be considered if there is tree removal. Clarissa Rowe discussed the large sugar maples and white pines that have dropped branches and how these old growth trees have impacted structures on the site, but acknowledged assessment will be comprehensive. JoAnn Robinson offered that the pathway in the OBG will also be considered.

3. **Presentation for the Historic Preservation of the Robbins Memorial Town Hall Garden:** Christine Harris, Friends of Robbins Memorial Garden, and JoAnn Robinson, Arlington Historical Commission introduced the application to restore the water feature inside the garden between Town Hall and the Robbins Library. Christine Harris discussed the engineering evaluation conducted by Weston & Sampson, as well as input received from Lauren Meier, a preservation landscape architect. Christine Harris acknowledged the initial application included restoration of the Menotomy Hunter statue, but this work will be completed separately through the Town. The project goal is to restore the water features consistent with historic design and intent. The last substantive work was completed in 1997, and the basin and mechanical system are in significant disrepair. The reflecting pool needs full replacement, while the upper pools need waterproofing and replacement of some stones which have fallen into the water. The project will include new mechanical systems and the development of maintenance plan. Pictures indicating existing conditions were shown.

JoAnn Robinson discussed the process, which would include formation of a project committee, engagement landscape architect and engineer, a file review and the development construction/bid documents. The project would then be put out to bid for construction, and would yield a maintenance plan based on life expectancy and scheduled tasks, including

seasonal shutdown procedures. The total project cost is \$643,213, with construction costs estimated at \$499,815.30.

Christine Harris concluded the presentation with remarks regarding the value of this asset. Upon completion of the water feature, the garden would be restored to its original, exquisite condition to be enjoyed by all. Upon restoration, it will have positive impact on sense of community, and encourage others to value this space. Many in Town have nostalgic memories of when the fountain was in operation.

Leslie Mayer acknowledged this is a jewel in the community and asked whether design costs were fully covered in current budget proposal. JoAnn Robinson acknowledged that engineering and landscape architect consultant service are covered in the budget. Leslie Mayer asked a follow-up question about public input. JoAnn Robinson discussed the limited design options given this has to be restored to the 1939 historic reference point, but agreed the project should be shared publicly with the community so they know about it.

Richard Murray reiterated how important this project is, and agrees it will set a sense of well-being and accomplishment in the community.

Kin Lau asked who would take ownership of the project once complete. Christine Harris and Clarissa Rowe acknowledged this would be the responsibility of the Town moving forward.

Chuck Tirone offered that this is a wonderful project.

Leslie Mayer asked about statue restoration. Jim Feeney acknowledged this work would likely happen first, but the project budget accounts for protection of the statue during construction.

Patsy Kraemer spoke about current rates for weddings at Town Hall being low compared to region, but need to achieve balance to ensure access.

Brian Rehrig questioned whether this Olmsted design would be eligible for grant funding. JoAnn Robinson said it may qualify for a Mass Historic Grant, as previous work was funded through matching grant.